United Nations A/53/PV.50

General Assembly
Fifty-third Session

Official Records

50th plenary meeting
Monday, 2 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti . . . . . (Uruguay)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Reports of the Fifth Committee

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: This morning, the General Assembly will first consider the reports of the Fifth Committee on agenda items 125, 136 and 140.

If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the reports of the Fifth Committee that are before it today.

It was so decided.

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote or position.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendations of the Committee have been made in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records. May I remind members that, under paragraph 7 of decision 34/401, the Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee."

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes.

Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Fifth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that we shall proceed to take decisions in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee, unless the Secretariat is notified otherwise.

Agenda item 125

Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/544)

The President *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/18).

I call on the representative of Morocco on a point of order.

98-86272 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Mr. Medina (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to draw attention to a small error in the language used in the first paragraph of the French text of the draft resolution. My delegation would like that error to be corrected.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): That will be taken care of.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 125.

Agenda item 136

Financing of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/545)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/19).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 136.

Agenda item 140

Financing of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force

Report of the Fifth Committee (A/53/546)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution recommended by the Fifth Committee in paragraph 6 of its report.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 53/20).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 140.

Agenda item 49

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to inform representatives that, following consultations regarding agenda item 49, "Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)", and taking into account General Assembly decision 52/409 of 10 November 1997, it is proposed that the General Assembly decide to postpone consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fourth session.

May I therefore take it that the Assembly, taking into account decision 52/409, wishes to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 49.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolution (A/53/L.17)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We shall now take action on draft resolution A/53/L.17, entitled "Emergency assistance to Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.17?

Draft resolution A/53/L.17 was adopted (resolution 53/1 C).

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

Agenda item 14

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/53/286)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.18)

Amendment (A/53/L.19)

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I invite the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, to present the report of the Agency for the year 1997.

Mr. ElBaradei (International Atomic Energy Agency): The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established with two objectives: to seek to enlarge the safe use of nuclear energy for peace and development, and to ensure, so far as it is able, that nuclear energy is used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

The pursuit of these twin objectives is more important than ever. The challenges of eradicating poverty and preserving our precious ecological heritage give rise to the need for the efficient transfer of appropriate technologies, including nuclear technology. The Kyoto Conference, the third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which raised awareness of the impact of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change, highlighted the necessity to use environmentally benign sources of energy. And the recent nuclear weapon tests made it clear that the international community must accelerate its efforts towards nuclear arms reduction and nuclear disarmament.

The General Assembly has before it the IAEA annual report for 1997. In this statement, I will focus on the priority work of the Agency under three headings: the contribution to peace and security; cooperation for development; and meeting global challenges in the fields of energy, the environment and nuclear safety. I will conclude with a description of the process of review and reform that I have initiated to ensure that the Agency is responding efficiently and effectively to the needs and priorities of its member States.

As noted by the Secretary-General in his recent statement to the First Committee, global nuclear disarmament must remain at the top of the international agenda. The United Nations has worked for over half a century to eliminate nuclear weapons everywhere and to oppose their acquisition anywhere. Through its verification and safeguards system, the IAEA endeavours to provide the necessary assurance that States are complying with their nuclear non-proliferation and arms control commitments. Over 180 States have undertaken to accept comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

To be effective, a verification system should provide a high degree of assurance that States are in full compliance with their obligations. As we learned in the case of Iraq, such a system must be able not only to verify declared nuclear activities but also to detect possible undeclared activities at an early stage. This is the main objective of the Model Protocol Additional to Safeguards Agreements which was adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors in May 1997.

I am pleased to report progress in the conclusion of additional protocols. To date, additional protocols for 33 States and parties to safeguards agreements have been approved by the Board of Governors. A strengthened safeguards system is a fundamental requirement for an effective non-proliferation regime. Adherence should be global. I would hope that by the year 2000 all States will have signed and brought into force their additional protocols. When this happens, a comprehensive safeguards agreement with an additional protocol will become the standard verification norm for the twenty-first century.

While the introduction of the strengthened safeguards system is proceeding well, in two special cases Agency safeguards activities are meeting difficulties.

The present status of the Agency's activities in Iraq is described in my report to the Security Council (S/1998/927). As the report notes, the Agency's verification activities in Iraq have resulted in a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. In the course of these verification activities, all of Iraq's known nuclear-weapons-related assets have been destroyed, removed or rendered harmless. As a result,

there are now no indications of Iraq's having retained any physical capability — facilities or hardware — for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material in quantities of any practical significance.

This statement is made on the basis of all available credible information. This same information provides no indication that Iraq has assembled nuclear weapons with or without fissile cores. However, there is an inevitable degree of uncertainty in any countrywide verification process which precludes providing absolute assurances of the absence of readily concealed material or equipment. Although we have identified the facilities, materials and equipment that comprise the big picture, it is beyond the capability of any countrywide verification process to discover all items. The Agency's thorough and wide-ranging verification activities provide credible assurance that little has been overlooked. But credible assurance is not the same as a so-called clean bill of health.

There are a few outstanding questions and concerns, but from a technical point of view they do not provide any impediment to the full implementation of the Agency's ongoing monitoring and Verification (OMV) plan. If Iraq resumes and maintains full cooperation, the Agency will be in a position to carry out all of its activities under the OMV plan, which include the right, on the basis of any information that comes to its attention, to continue to investigate the few remaining outstanding questions and concerns and any other aspect of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme and to neutralize any items discovered through such investigation.

The techniques and procedures used in OMV are essentially the same as those used to detect, verify and, as necessary, neutralize the components of Iraq's clandestine programme. For that reason, OMV activities in Iraq would be largely unaffected by a Security Council determination on Iraq's compliance with its obligations under resolution 687 (1991).

All of the above, however, is predicated on Iraq's resumption of cooperation and the restoration of the Agency's right to full and free access. Without such access the Agency cannot fully implement its OMV plan. The OMV plan is an integral whole and can only be meaningfully implemented in its entirety. It must incorporate a robust detection and deterrence capability so as to provide substantial assurance of the absence of prohibited activities and material in Iraq. Our current inability to inspect new sites seriously weakens the OMV plan and the assurances the Agency is able to give.

In the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Agency continues to assert its right to perform inspections under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) comprehensive safeguards agreement, which remains in force. At the same time, since 1992 and at the request of the Security Council, we have been verifying a freeze of the graphite-moderated reactors and related facilities in accordance with the Agreed Framework between the United States of America and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

While the Agency has been able to verify the freeze, it continues to be unable to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and hence unable to conclude that there has been no diversion of nuclear material. This is because the Democratic People's Republic of Korea accepts Agency activities solely within the context of the Agreed Framework and not under its safeguards agreement.

Little progress has been made in 11 rounds of technical discussions between the Agency and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. During the most recent round in October, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea provided a list of documents which, in its view, should be preserved for the Agency to be able to verify the nuclear material declaration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at a future date. The list is not complete. Since 1995 our efforts to secure access to the necessary information and to agree on the required measures for the preservation of the documents have been futile. Unless all relevant information is made available, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of the declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has repeatedly linked progress in discussions with the Agency to progress in the implementation of the Agreed Framework and the construction of the two light water reactors. I should like to recall in this connection that under the Agreed Framework the Agency must have verified the compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement before any key components of the light water reactors under construction are delivered.

In addition to a complete ban on nuclear testing, two actions have always been identified as indispensable to nuclear arms reduction and nuclear disarmament: freezing

the production of fissile materials for weapon purposes and the gradual reduction of stockpiles of such materials. I am pleased to note that measures are being taken in both areas.

In August the Conference on Disarmament finally agreed to commence negotiation of a treaty prohibiting the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In furtherance of General Assembly resolution 48/75 of 1993, I wrote to the President of the Conference on Disarmament to offer, if requested, the assistance of the Agency in developing the technical verification arrangements for such a treaty.

Over the past two years the Agency's Secretariat has been involved in discussions with the Russian Federation and the United States of America to develop modalities for possible IAEA verification that nuclear material transferred from the military sector in the two countries remained irreversibly in the peaceful sector. Progress was made in September, when I met with Minister Adamov of the Russian Federation and Secretary Richardson of the United States of America to set goals for future work.

The Agency stands ready to contribute its verification and safeguards expertise and experience to the full realization of these initiatives. An important question that still needs to be addressed, however, is financing. In response to a request from the Board of Governors, the Secretariat is preparing an options paper on this subject. In my view, the possible establishment of a nuclear arms control verification fund based on an agreed scheme of assessed contributions could be a viable option to finance these initiatives and possibly the verification of other nuclear arms control and reduction measures.

Nuclear-weapons proliferation and threats to public safety could also arise from illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. Of the nearly 300 incidents in the Agency's illicit trafficking database, some 130 involve nuclear material. However, only 10 per cent of those involve highly enriched uranium or plutonium, the materials for making nuclear weapons, and then mostly in insignificant quantities. The Agency's programme in this field consists of coordinating information exchange, providing advisory services on physical protection and giving technical guidance to international organizations.

With regard to terrorism, the Agency welcomed the invitation of the General Assembly in its 1997 resolution 52/165 to assist in the deliberations of the Ad Hoc Committee assigned the task of elaborating an international convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism. The General Conference of the Agency this year adopted a resolution which invited the General Assembly, in elaborating the convention on nuclear terrorism, to bear in mind the Agency's activities in the field of illicit trafficking. I am pleased that within the Working Group of the Sixth Committee which recently met on this matter a draft convention was prepared which recognizes the Agency's expertise and ongoing activities in this field. We look forward to the successful conclusion of work on this subject, and stand ready to assist.

The second area I wish to focus on is the contribution of nuclear technology transfer for development. Meeting the needs and aspirations of the world's growing population requires the application of the best available technologies. Support for nuclear technology transfer for exclusively peaceful purposes, bearing in mind the special needs of developing countries, is an integral part of the international consensus relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy that is embodied in the IAEA Statute and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The role of the Agency is to ensure that where nuclear technology is the most effective and appropriate technology to address a particular problem, and that where the recipient country has an adequate infrastructure to adopt and sustain such technology, the technology is transferred safely and in the most efficient and effective manner.

Nuclear techniques are usually one component of larger development programmes. Frequently they are used to gather essential scientific data for project planning or to test results. Their value lies not only in their direct impact on developmental goals but also in their contribution to making more effective the efforts of others. For this reason, partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the field of development are among the Agency's highest priorities.

Some examples of the Agency's activities are especially worth highlighting. In the area of contributing to food security, the use of biofertilizer technology to improve nitrogen fixation in soil tilled by small farmers in Zimbabwe has yielded increases in soya bean production of more than 100 per cent and in some cases up to 500 per cent, while reducing dependency on chemical fertilizers. This project is being expanded to support activities in several sub-Saharan countries, utilizing the experience and capabilities in Zimbabwe.

The use of the Agency-developed sterile insect technique (SIT) for area-wide eradication of agricultural pests is increasing. Based upon the results of first-phase activities in tsetse fly eradication on Zanzibar Island, the Agency and the International Fund for Agricultural Development are jointly supporting the Ethiopian Government in a project to eradicate the tsetse fly in the southern Rift Valley. In Jamaica, a new project to eradicate the New World screw-worm using SIT has attracted an $8 million loan from the United States Department of Agriculture.

In the area of health and life expectancy, where women and children in developing countries are most vulnerable, nuclear techniques will help evaluate an $18 million community nutrition programme in Senegal, supported by the World Food Programme and the World Bank. Joint project formulation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has led to an isotope-based study in Indonesia of the efficiency of iron and zinc supplementation to reduce anaemia and growth-faltering in infants. In cooperation with national and regional public health authorities, isotopic evaluations to improve national nutrition interventions are being introduced with IAEA assistance in five Latin American countries, targeting over 10 million women and children.

The Agency currently supports 40 national projects and four major regional projects to upgrade radiation therapy services for the treatment of cancer, and it has recently assisted the Governments of Ghana, Ethiopia, Mongolia and Namibia to open their first such facilities. This adds a new dimension to medical management in those countries.

Freshwater scarcity is a problem that could affect two thirds of the world's population by the year 2025. The Agency is contributing to meeting this challenge. Environmental isotopes and artificial tracer techniques are particularly effective in the investigation of water leakage in dams and reservoirs and in the assessment of water resources. They were demonstrated recently in identifying the origins of a serious leak in the Aoulouz dam in Morocco. In cooperation with the 24 members of the African Regional Cooperative Agreement, planning has commenced to establish a regional capability to expand the utilization of those techniques.

There is also much ongoing research and development in the area of nuclear desalination to produce potable water competitively. At the IAEA General Conference last month Member States adopted a resolution supporting the strengthening of the Agency's activities relating to nuclear desalination and to small and medium reactor development. This programme includes promoting international information exchange and cooperation and assisting developing countries in planning and implementing demonstration programmes.

I am pleased to be able to report some positive developments with respect to the Agency's Technical Cooperation Fund. This year a number of Member States have resumed their contributions, several States have made substantial payments to clear their arrears of assessed programme costs and others have contributed for the first time. I would encourage more States to follow these trends. They are a strong testament to the value of the technical cooperation programme and an encouragement for us to make it even more effective and efficient.

The last area of focus concerns energy, safety and the environment. As the international focal point for the application of nuclear science and technology, the Agency has important functions with respect to several global issues that require international cooperation. While the authority and responsibility for decision-making in the field of nuclear technology is at the national level, the implications of those decisions quite often transcend borders. I will deal with three key areas: energy for sustainable development; nuclear safety, including radioactive waste and management of spent fuel; and preserving the environment.

Energy is essential for development. Global energy demand is growing. It is projected to increase twofold to threefold for developing countries in the next 30 years, depending on the economic growth scenario. Concern about the possible impact of greenhouse gas emissions on climate change is also growing. Energy produced from fossil fuels accounts for about half of human-made greenhouse gas emissions. The challenge is to ensure that environmental concerns, as represented by the commitments made at the Kyoto Conference on Climate Change last December, are factored into national consideration of energy options.

At the end of 1997, 437 nuclear reactors operating in 31 countries provided about 17 per cent of global electricity and accounted for the avoidance of about 8 per cent of global carbon emissions. Several existing reactors are now approaching the end of their design life. Decisions must be made to extend their time in service, to replace them with new plants or to find other options.

With varying degrees of urgency, both developed and developing countries are thus faced with major energy choices to meet the needs of their growing economies and populations without unnecessarily contributing to greenhouse gas emissions. Except for nuclear or hydropower, which has limited growth potential, there are not yet any other economically viable, minimal-greenhouse-gas-emission options for baseload power generation. The extensive use of renewable resources for this purpose does not appear to be close at hand.

The choice of nuclear power and of a particular energy mix are naturally national decisions which have potential global impacts. There are compelling reasons why nuclear power, together with improved energy efficiency, greater use of renewable energy sources and clean technologies for improved use of fossil fuels, should continue to be a major component of many national energy strategies. But there are also substantial hurdles, particularly with respect to public acceptance in some countries.

The role of the IAEA is to ensure that the facts are available for the nuclear power option to be given a full and fair hearing. To this end, in close cooperation with eight other international organizations, the IAEA has developed the "DECADES" database and methodology for the comparative assessment of different energy chains and conversion technology options. The comparisons include energy demand scenarios and supply options, economic analysis, the health and environmental impacts, the risks of energy systems, and sustainable energy development. At present this methodological framework is being used by over 30 member States to evaluate independently their energy options.

The Agency is also prepared to contribute to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change third assessment report, and is working together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the World Energy Council to conduct a world energy assessment for the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, which at its ninth session in 2001 will address energy issues for the first time.

With respect to nuclear safety, I have to say that it is a global public concern. In recent years the global safety record for nuclear power plants has shown continued improvement. However, the Agency's Nuclear Safety Review for 1997 identifies events concerning management practices in power plants which provide a warning that established nuclear power programmes can experience a gradual deterioration in safety performance unless there are continuous efforts to maintain and improve safety. Some continued incidents involving radiation sources underline the need for effective safety practices in all nuclear activities. And a high degree of national vigilance is required with respect to the potential impact on nuclear safety of new developments such as the deregulation of domestic energy markets.

The IAEA's role is to develop a comprehensive nuclear safety regime that consists of three elements: international binding agreements; safety standards; and measures to provide for the application of those agreements and standards.

In recent years several important international conventions, negotiated under IAEA auspices, have helped to fill gaps in the international nuclear safety regime. These include new conventions on nuclear safety and on the safety of spent fuel management and radioactive waste management, as well as improvements to the nuclear liability regime. But we also remain alert to the possibility that there might be other areas in which the international community as a whole would benefit from binding norms. The Agency's Safety Standards Series, which covers the areas of nuclear, radiation, waste management and transport safety, represents international consensus on safety requirements and their implementation. In the present biennium we will largely complete the preparation or revision of the entire corpus of safety standards — a total of some 70 documents — to ensure that they are comprehensive, scientifically accurate and up to date.

It is not enough to adopt safety standards and measures, however; the priority is to ensure their application in an effective manner. The Agency offers a wide range of services, including several peer review services, information exchange, education and training, and coordination of safety related research and development to ensure, in all countries with nuclear programmes, that prudent safety measures and procedures are carried out effectively and efficiently. Agency safety services are key to achieving a world standard of excellence in the application of safety standards.

Also the General Conference of the IAEA has recently recognized and encouraged the Agency's activities to assist Member States to diagnose and remedy possible year 2000 computer system problems — the so-called Y2K problems — in civilian nuclear power plants,

fuel cycle facilities and medical facilities which use radioactive materials.

Decisions on the management of spent fuel and the final disposal of radioactive waste can be delayed but cannot be avoided. The quantities involved are growing. Existing and planned storage capacity will keep ahead of accumulated inventories, but there is concern that in some countries the resources will not be available to construct planned facilities. This is an area for urgent national attention and cooperation on an international or regional basis, as appropriate.

Through the assessment of different technologies and the dissemination of information, the Agency is supporting member States in properly addressing low and intermediate level waste management issues. With respect to high level radioactive waste, experts agree that technical solutions exist for its safe and permanent disposal. But progress in demonstrating these solutions has not been rapid. One of the comparative advantages of nuclear power is the small volume of wastes generated. However, this will not be perceived as an advantage until available technical solutions for safe and permanent disposal of wastes are demonstrated. The need for member States to develop disposal plans and construct facilities has thus become an urgent priority.

In this United Nations International Year of the Ocean, I would highlight the unique contribution of the IAEA Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco to addressing the global issues of marine pollution, particularly through its active support for the United Nations Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities. It is worth recalling that some 80 per cent of marine pollution originates from human activities on land. Monitoring and assessing the impact of land-based pollution, discharges from ships, nuclear weapons testing and dumping of hazardous wastes is one of the responsibilities of the Marine Environment Laboratory.

In October I had the pleasure of opening the new purpose-built facilities of the Marine Environment Laboratory in Monaco. In cooperation with the Principality of Monaco, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), and the International Commission for Scientific Exploration of the Mediterranean Sea, the Agency organized a major symposium on marine pollution to share the latest scientific knowledge on the sources, behaviour and impact of marine contaminants throughout the oceans of the world.

At the same time, the Agency hosted a ministerial level meeting to strengthen international cooperation in marine environmental assessment of the Black Sea region, where environmental degradation as a result of human activities has had devastating economic and social effects. The application of nuclear techniques is demonstrably the most effective and appropriate technology to assess the environmental degradation of the Black Sea.

As will be noted from the description I have given of the many urgent items which require the Agency's attention, the international nuclear agenda is growing, not shrinking. Throughout this decade the Agency has met increased responsibilities most often within the constraints of a zero real growth regular budget. But, as we seek to respond to the expectations of our member States in this period of rapid change, the gap between priorities and affordabilities is growing.

For the Agency the implications are clear. We must achieve greater efficiency wherever possible and we must check that our programmes meet the priorities of our member States.

To this end, at the beginning of this year I initiated a comprehensive three-level review process covering the Agency's management and programmes. The first level, management review, consists largely of measures to improve efficiency in three areas: policy and coordination, programme development and evaluation, and procedures and personnel. I am placing particular emphasis on the creation of a single Agency culture to ensure that the Secretariat is clear on its priorities, coordinated in its activities and efficient in its processes.

The second level comprises an external review of the Agency's overall programme by a senior expert group to assess priorities and to present recommendations on future directions. In consultation with member States, and drawing on the proposals of the senior expert group, an Agency medium-term strategy is being prepared. It will set out the Agency's overall objectives and goals for the next five years.

The importance of public understanding of the role of nuclear energy and that of the Agency means that effective public information must be an integral part of the Agency's activities. Therefore, the third part of the

review process focuses on the role and management of public information and the Agency's outreach to civil society, particularly the nuclear, arms control and development communities and the media, using the most modern and effective tools.

We live in times of change and uncertainty. Nuclear science and technology has always drawn two reactions: hope that its safe and peaceful application will help us on the path to a better future, and apprehension that its misuse could have catastrophic effects. Today, the beneficial applications of nuclear science and technology are a global reality as we seek solutions to the urgent problems of combatting climate change, preserving the environment, feeding and improving the health of growing populations and supplying the energy needed for economic growth and development. There are compelling reasons to increase cooperation for the safe and peaceful use of nuclear technology.

In this regard, the IAEA plays the central role in fostering the global sharing of the benefits of nuclear technology while assisting the international community to curb nuclear weapon proliferation and to move towards nuclear disarmament.

As is often observed, freedom from want and freedom from fear are two sides of the same coin. To the achievement of both of these objectives the IAEA is fully committed.

I would like to conclude by expressing my appreciation to the Government of Austria, which continues to be a most gracious host to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call now on the representative of Slovenia to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.18.

Mr. Türk (Slovenia): My delegation welcomes the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as transmitted to the General Assembly by a note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/53/286. The report represents very thorough reflection on the wide range of issues that have been the focus of the Agency's attention over the past year.

We also greatly appreciate the introduction of the report by Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the Agency. The past year has been Mr. ElBaradei's first year in office, and we congratulate him on the way in which he is conducting the work of the Agency. Under his guidance, the Agency continues to be the principal engine for international cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peace and development.

Nuclear energy continues to make a significant contribution to meeting the global demand for electricity. In this regard, the Agency continues to act as a forum for assessing experience and sharing ideas on national and international developments. We have witnessed the successful culmination of many years of work on the further strengthening of the international legal framework to help ensure that nuclear energy is used safely and solely for peaceful purposes. The Agency has also continued its most valuable contribution to the United Nations system's objectives of protecting the environment and promoting sustainable development, and has made significant contributions in the fields of insect pest eradication and proper water resources management.

At its meeting last September, the IAEA Board of Governors elected a representative of Slovenia as its Chairman for the 1998-1999 period. That gives me the great honour of introducing, on behalf of the sponsors, draft resolution A/53/L.18, on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The draft resolution reflects the main achievements of the Agency in key areas related to energy development, nuclear safety, verification and technology transfer. Permit me to draw the attention of members to some of them that are reflected in the draft resolution.

Safeguards agreements designed to strengthen the Agency's international verification of nuclear programmes are an important element in promoting greater confidence among States and thus contributing to strengthening their collective security. The draft resolution therefore welcomes measures and decisions taken by the Agency, in particular the Model Additional Protocol, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and improving the efficiency of the safeguards system. Thirty-two States and other parties to safeguards agreements have signed the Model Additional Protocol so far. It is to be hoped that other States and other parties concerned will soon follow suit.

The IAEA continues to play an important role in acting as a driving force in nuclear safety through its programmes and by promoting global cooperation. In this regard the draft resolution urges all States to strive for international cooperation in carrying out the work of the

Agency and welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

The draft resolution further welcomes the Agency's efforts to strengthen technical cooperation activities through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries and its efforts to encourage peaceful applications of atomic energy and nuclear techniques. These programmes contribute to achieving sustainable development in many developing countries.

The IAEA is conducting important activities in the fields of prevention, response, training and information exchange in support of efforts against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources. The draft resolution welcomes those measures and decides to bear in mind the Agency's activities when elaborating an international convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

The draft resolution expresses deep concern over the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its IAEA safeguards agreement and calls upon that member to comply fully with it. Regarding nuclear inspections in Iraq, the draft resolution calls upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as to resume a dialogue with the Agency immediately.

On behalf of the sponsors — now joined by Bulgaria, Greece, Luxembourg, Monaco and New Zealand — Slovenia is pleased to put the draft resolution forward. The draft resolution is the result of a cooperative and constructive exchange of views among delegations in Vienna and here in New York. The sponsors believe that it accurately reflects the activities of the Agency in the year under review. The sponsors are also grateful to the secretariats of the International Atomic Energy Agency and of the United Nations for their help in putting this draft resolution forward. It is our hope that the draft resolution will receive wide support among the Members of the United Nations.

The President (*interpretation from Spanish*): I call on the representative of Iraq to introduce an amendment to draft resolution A/53/L.18, contained in document A/53/L.19.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have the pleasure of introducing Iraq's amendment, contained in document A/53/L.19, to draft resolution A/53/L.18, entitled "Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency".

I wish first to reaffirm Iraq's position: we reject attempts to politicize the draft resolution on the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA carries out an important role in the service of the international community through promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and implementing the safeguards system under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We must all respect the professionalism and independence of the Agency.

Paragraph 7 of draft resolution A/53/L.18 pertains to Iraq and gives a crystal clear example of the attempts being made by some States — among them permanent members of the Security Council — to distort the conclusions of the Agency. For example, the last sentence of that paragraph says, in part:

(*spoke in English*)

> "stresses that greater transparency by Iraq would contribute greatly to the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns".

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Paragraph 19 of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (S/1998/927) presented to the Security Council on 7 October 1998 says:

> "As previously stated, greater transparency by Iraq would contribute considerably to clarifying the few remaining questions and concerns relevant to Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme."

We leave it to the intelligence of the Members of the General Assembly to guess the purpose of changing "clarifying the few remaining questions" to "the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns".

Based on this fact, the delegation of Iraq has proposed an amendment to paragraph 7 of the draft resolution which would make it more balanced and more in line with the Agency's evaluation of the Iraqi case in its report to the Security Council on 7 October 1998. The amendment I am submitting, which I hope representatives will support, is a verbatim quotation of paragraphs 23 and 17 of the Agency's report. The quotation from

paragraph 23 confirms that the few remaining questions regarding Iraq's former nuclear programme can be dealt with through continued monitoring. From a practical point of view, this means that the requirements of implementing paragraph 22 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) concerning the nuclear question have been met. As the Agency's Director General himself indicated just a few minutes ago, paragraph 17 of the Agency's report confirms that the Agency has a technically coherent picture of Iraq's former nuclear programme and that there is no evidence whatsoever that there remains in Iraq any material potential for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material. These two conclusions, while overdue, nevertheless confirm that the Agency has carried out the task of disarmament, something which would not have been possible without Iraq's full cooperation with the Agency. I hope that representatives will consider our amendments in accordance with the logic of justice and fairness.

Finally, as our amendment has been distributed to the Assembly just this morning, I would ask that the on it be postponed until Wednesday, 4 Novembe h would give Member States ample time to consider it.

Mrs. Arce de Jeannet (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico is grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the Agency's annual report for 1997. We note with great satisfaction that, on the fortieth anniversary of the IAEA, efforts are continuing to strengthen the international legal framework that ensures that nuclear energy is used safely and exclusively for peaceful purposes.

I would like to refer to a few of the items covered in the report. The first relates to nuclear and radiological safety. Maintaining and continuously improving the whole nuclear infrastructure is a priority for Mexico. The safe use of nuclear energy in all its applications is an imperative for the protection of national populations and territories, in addition to being a legal obligation. This task includes the strengthening of domestic capacities for the development of national standards and the evaluation of their correct application, the constant updating of new technologies and of evaluation and safety measurement equipment, as well as the application of safeguards.

I wish to place on record our commitment to strengthen the legal regime established to guarantee the global application of the basic safety principles that govern the management of radioactive wastes and spent fuel following the adoption in 1997 of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. My delegation also welcomes the adoption of the Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage. We are convinced that both these legal instruments will contribute to the strengthening of the preventive system. We therefore support the work being done to prepare national reports that will be examined at the first meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which will be held in 1999.

The second subject to which I wish to refer has to do with agriculture and food. We have noted the fact that the activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency in this area cover five principal areas, among which we would particularly like to highlight the efforts of Member States in the fight against insects and other pests and for the protection of food and the environment. We express our broadest support for the continuation and strengthening of IAEA activities in these fields, as they constitute a practical application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in areas of particular importance to developing countries.

In Mexico extensive use has been made of nuclear technology for the production of sterile insects, particularly to combat the Mediterranean fruit fly and the screw worm. Mexican facilities for the production of sterile insects are among the largest and most advanced in the world, and a large part of their production is exported.

With regard to food, the Mexican National Institute for Nuclear Research has achieved the phyto-improvement of two varieties of wheat, which have been released for use on the National Register of Seed Certification. The Institute has also been operating a food irradiation plant for over 10 years now. That plant is functioning at full capacity and mainly irradiates grains and spices. We would like to emphasize the fact that, with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Institute conducted a technical economic feasibility study which points to the possibility of establishing a number of food irradiation plants in central Mexico.

The third topic to which I wish to refer is technical cooperation for development. We have studied carefully the relevant section of the Agency's annual report, and

the conclusions contained therein are a source of profound concern. While the International Atomic Energy Agency has taken further measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness, in practice we see that there has been an unexpected reduction in contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund. A situation of uncertainty now exists regarding necessary resources for the full implementation of the technical cooperation programme adopted by the Board of Governors.

Mexico has emphasized, and will continue to emphasize, that in the implementation of its mandate, the International Atomic Energy Agency needs to maintain a vital balance between safety and technical assistance activities.

Technical cooperation in the framework of the Agency is not the result of altruistic ideas or ethical imperatives. We must recall once again that international cooperation for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is a contractual counterpart to the renunciation by the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of the acquisition or development of nuclear weapons.

For this reason, we make an emphatic appeal to all the member States of the International Atomic Energy Agency to endeavour to attain the objective of $73 million in 1999 for technical cooperation financing and to maintain that level for the year 2000.

Mexico reiterates its unswerving commitment to the strengthening of the activities of the IAEA. Its four decades of existence have proved the need for an international forum to deliberate on the various uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and demonstrated the invaluable role that it plays in the strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. We will be participating with determination in the Agency's work in order to confront the challenges of this end of century.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): Allow me to start by expressing my delegation's appreciation to Mr. Mohammed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his comprehensive report on the activities of the Agency for the past year. I should like also to commend staff members of the IAEA secretariat for their dedication and hard work.

We recognize that the IAEA, for the past four decades, has faithfully pursued its two main objectives: promoting peaceful uses of nuclear energy and preventing nuclear proliferation. The Agency has been able to expand its role in peaceful uses of nuclear energy from power generation to a wide array of industrial, medical and agricultural applications. The Agency's safeguards activities have also made significant contributions to the strengthening of a global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

My delegation appreciates the active role of the IAEA in enhancing nuclear safety worldwide through a series of initiatives to expand the legal framework governing nuclear safety.

We believe that one of the most remarkable achievements is the adoption of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management at the Vienna Diplomatic Conference in 1997 under the auspices of the IAEA. The wide adherence to, and the early implementation of, this Joint Convention will serve to avert the potential hazards of spent fuel and radioactive waste.

My delegation also welcomes the progress made so far in the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety since its entry into force in 1996. Last September, the organizational meeting of contracting parties to the Convention was held in Vienna under the auspices of the IAEA to prepare for the first review meeting of the Convention in April 1999. As one of the original contracting parties to the Convention, my country is prepared to play an active role in the upcoming preparatory work for the first review meeting. In this regard, my Government has already submitted its national report pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Convention.

The Republic of Korea is now regarded as one of the major nuclear-power-generating States in the world. In August this year, we started operating two new nuclear-power-plant units, bringing Korea's total number of units in operation to 14. These units, each with a 1,000-megawatt capacity, are built according to the Korean standard nuclear power plant model. This plant model is the product of a project started in 1984 to standardize nuclear-power-plant design.

By the year 2015, the share of nuclear power in Korea's total electric power generation is expected to increase from 34 per cent to 46 per cent, while the number of units in operation will double to 28.

In other fields of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, my Government has also carried out many research and development programmes. Hanaro, an indigenously designed and constructed 30-megawatt research reactor, has been in operation since 1995. Small and medium-size reactors, such as the system integrated modular advanced reactor, are another area of our expanded research and development activities.

My country has also participated actively in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes by hosting regional training courses and international symposiums. This month, my Government will sponsor an international symposium on the advanced light-water reactor in Seoul.

My country has always strongly supported the strengthening of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime and the Agency's efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of its safeguards system. In view of the renewed urgency for a stronger safeguards system, as demonstrated in the cases of Iraq and North Korea, we welcome the IAEA initiative to adopt the Model Additional Protocol in 1997. We believe that the strengthened safeguards system will endow the Agency with the enhanced ability to detect undeclared nuclear activities. It is therefore encouraging that the IAEA has so far concluded additional protocols with 31 States, including three nuclear-weapon States. For its part, my Government has taken steps to incorporate the measures required under the Model Protocol into domestic laws and regulations aimed at their early implementation. My Government hopes to finalize the consultations with the Agency on the Additional Protocol at an early date.

In addition, my Government last year strengthened the State system for accounting and control of nuclear materials with a view to introducing a national safeguards inspection system. Under this system, the Government can carry out national safeguards inspections in parallel with the IAEA safeguards inspections.

Let me now turn to the North Korean nuclear issue. Since this issue became acute in 1993, the international community has continuously called upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement. It is quite regrettable to hear again from the Director General of the IAEA that the Agency has not been able to verify the correctness and completeness of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's initial declaration and that no progress has been made for the preservation of relevant information which is indispensable for the verification of North Korea's past nuclear activities.

We are particularly concerned over the Agency's difficulties in preserving relevant information that it deems necessary to verify North Korea's past nuclear activities in the future. As the Director General rightly pointed out in his statement at this meeting:

> "Unless all relevant information is made available, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of the declaration of nuclear material by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

In spite of a series of consultations with the IAEA, North Korea persists in its non-cooperative attitude. It must be underlined once again that North Korea is without any doubt under a legal obligation as a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to fully implement its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. That agreement remains binding and in force, as was stressed in the statement by the President of the Security Council on 4 November 1994 and reaffirmed on many occasions through resolutions of the United Nations and the IAEA.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea insists that the North Korean nuclear issue should be resolved only through the 1994 Agreed Framework between it and the United States. However, as we have clearly stated on many occasions, the Agreed Framework is not a substitute for its safeguards agreement with the IAEA, nor is it intended to exonerate it from its treaty obligations.

Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea made an unambiguous commitment to nuclear non-proliferation under section IV, paragraph 1, of the Agreed Framework, by agreeing that

> "The DPRK will remain a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and will allow implementation of its safeguards agreement under the Treaty."

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea also agreed in section IV, paragraph 3, of the Agreed Framework that key nuclear components of light-water reactors will not be delivered until the Agency finalizes the verification of past nuclear activities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea should therefore come forward to cooperate fully with the IAEA to preserve all

the relevant information indispensable for the verification of the correctness and completeness of its initial report.

The non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with this treaty obligation, if left unchecked, could eventually undermine the competence and authority of the IAEA as the guardian of nuclear non-proliferation. Inaction on the part of the international community over such unprecedented non-compliance will only help weaken the nuclear non-proliferation regime itself, particularly at a time when concerted action by the international community to strengthen the regime is required more than ever.

This year again the Republic of Korea has actively participated in Vienna and New York in drafting a draft resolution on the report of the IAEA. We believe that the draft resolution contained in document A/53/L.18 reflects in a balanced manner the interests of the international community in the work of the IAEA. As one of the sponsors of this draft resolution, my delegation hopes that, as in the past, it will be adopted by an overwhelming majority.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, we are faced with many daunting challenges to the peace, security and development of the world. However, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy should remain among the most important and urgent priorities on the agenda of the international community for the decades to come. To this end, my Government joins the international community in reaffirming its commitment to and support for the IAEA so as to enable the organization to continue to play its unique role as guardian of the non-proliferation regime and promoter of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the following States associate themselves with this statement: the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Allow me to start by expressing the European Union's gratitude for the outstanding work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to congratulate the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, on the remarkable work he and his staff have done during the last 12 months to prepare the Agency for the challenges of the next millennium.

The European Union believes that the IAEA can look forward to the new millennium with confidence. The Agency is widely regarded as a model international organization. This enviable position brings with it the challenge to sustain a high level of achievement and efficiency and, where possible, to do even better. The continuous quest for efficiency and effectiveness is a trademark of the IAEA, and we encourage the new Director General in his endeavours.

In this regard, the European Union welcomes the Director General's initiative in setting up a senior expert group to look at all aspects of the Agency's work, complemented by the work of a group of senior managers in the Agency in looking at management issues. We look forward to hearing the outcome of their deliberations, and would urge the Director General to pursue vigorously those recommendations from both groups that will lead to even greater administrative efficiency. Attention should also be given to the issue of prioritization of the Agency's activities, both within and between major programmes. High-priority programmes should be fully justified. Projects that serve only a limited set of needs and interests risk unduly burdening the tight budget of the Agency.

The existence of an effective IAEA enjoying the full support of its member States is essential for the entire international community, as the Agency has a key role to play in helping humanity to maximize the benefits and minimize the risks emanating from nuclear sciences and their applications. The risk of nuclear technology being misused to contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons represents one of the fields in which the Agency's expertise is constantly needed. The recent nuclear tests undertaken in South Asia have highlighted the importance of global efforts.

The European Union expresses its deep concern over the situation in South Asia. The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan have damaged stability in the region and isolated both countries from the international community's non-proliferation efforts. The Union has repeatedly condemned those tests, called on both countries to adhere to the international non-proliferation regime and strongly urged India and Pakistan to refrain from further nuclear tests and from the development, assembly or deployment of nuclear weapons and/or ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear warheads.

The European Union has taken due note of statements by both sides regarding moratoriums on further nuclear tests. The European Union welcomes the apparent intention of India and Pakistan to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). They should sign and ratify the Treaty swiftly and unconditionally.

India and Pakistan should also adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as it stands. The European Union welcomes the intention of India and Pakistan to contribute to the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament. We now urge both countries to introduce moratoriums on fissile material production while a treaty is negotiated.

We urge both countries to legislate to exert stringent controls over the export of material, equipment and technology controlled under the Nuclear Suppliers Group trigger and dual-use lists and the Missile Technology Control Regime Annex.

Mrs. Osode (Liberia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The European Union welcomes the 23 September agreement by India and Pakistan to resume the dialogue between them on all outstanding issues, particularly on all matters pertaining to peace and security. The Union stands ready to contribute to efforts to promote regional stability.

Following the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 1996, which constituted an important step on the way towards the implementation of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the European Union has been active, and it will continue to be active, in promoting the early entry into force of the Treaty and its universality. The European Union welcomes the fact that 150 countries have signed the Treaty and that 21 have ratified it. It calls on all States to sign and ratify the Treaty, especially those 44 States whose ratification is needed for the Treaty to come into force. The Union also fully supports the efforts by the Preparatory Commission to establish the Treaty's verification regime in a timely and effective manner.

Now that the CTBT negotiations have been successfully concluded, the realization of the second measure under the action programme contained in the decision on principles and objectives is called for. This involves the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the fissile material cut-off treaty. Therefore, Austria, as the current President of the European Union, put forward a draft decision on the cut-off treaty at the beginning of the 1998 session of the Conference on Disarmament. The Union heartily welcomes the achievement of consensus on the basis of the Shannon Report and the mandate contained therein and the decision to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We have frequently reiterated the importance of such a treaty, which will constitute a significant contribution to the achievement of both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. We urge all States to introduce or maintain a moratorium on fissile material production for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices pending the conclusion of these negotiations. We look forward to making our contribution to substantial negotiations, which should start at the beginning of the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

IAEA safeguards are another crucial element in combating nuclear proliferation. The Union is fully committed to the strengthening of the safeguards system. We welcomed the adoption on 15 May 1997 by the IAEA Board of Governors of the Model Additional Protocol on strengthened safeguards. On 8 June 1998 the Council of the European Union authorized the Commission to conclude the three additional protocols between the European Union member States, the European Atomic Energy Community and the IAEA. The agreement was signed on 22 September 1998.

The Union calls on all States having safeguards agreements with the IAEA to conclude as quickly as possible additional protocols to these agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol on strengthened IAEA safeguards measures. This is of the utmost importance in order to send a strong and timely signal to the international community that nuclear non-proliferation and efficient legal commitments thereto have to be seen as a crucial element of global security.

In this regard, we call particularly upon India, Pakistan and Israel to conclude the additional protocols without any delay, especially in order to assume responsibilities in the field of export controls and other key elements contained in the Model Protocol. At the same time, we call upon these States to accept full-scope IAEA safeguards. The European Union notes with

interest the announcement by Cuba of its intention to enter into negotiations with the Agency on the possible adoption of some of the measures provided for in the Model Protocol.

The European Union deplores Iraq's unilateral suspension of cooperation with the IAEA. We commend the Director General of the Agency and his staff for their strenuous efforts to implement all relevant Security Council resolutions, and we welcome the IAEA report of 7 October 1998. The Union calls upon Iraq to cooperate fully with the IAEA in accordance with its obligation under the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq and the United Nations Secretary-General on 23 February 1998, as well as to resume dialogue with the IAEA immediately. We stress that greater transparency by Iraq would contribute greatly to the resolution of the remaining questions and concerns.

We must once again reiterate that we remain deeply concerned by the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement. We strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to come into full compliance with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA without further delay and to support all non-proliferation efforts by refraining from any act that would run counter to stability in the region. In this context, the European Union reiterates its concern at the launch undertaken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on 31 August. We continue to fully support the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) and the Agreed Framework, and we call on other countries to contribute to the non-proliferation objectives of the Organization.

Regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, I would like to refer briefly to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The European Union continues to stress the need to implement the highest possible safety standards, and urges all countries to do their utmost to operate all their nuclear facilities in line with existing international regulations and recommendations. The Union welcomes the ever-increasing number of States parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and looks forward to the full implementation of the Convention.

The Union would like to restate its position on the amendment of article VI. Members of the European Union see no need to change the existing size of the Board. We are therefore not seeking expansion. Nevertheless, we are not insensitive to the concerns of other member States. For this reason, and in the interest of consensus, we support the proposal by the Chairman of the Board which provides for an extension of the Board by six members and foresees a procedure for amending article VI whereby the amendment would enter into force only once inclusion of all Agency members in one of the regional areas was assured.

The need to ensure an adequate amount of technical cooperation, and thereby to ensure that all countries have adequate access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, figures among the Agency's most important activities. In this regard, we recognize the need for member States of the IAEA to make voluntary contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund in order to allow the IAEA to efficiently implement its respective programmes.

The Union attaches great importance to the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. This represents a major step in the endeavour to cover the safety of all sectors of the nuclear fuel cycle by legally binding international instruments. The increasing number of States signatories to this Convention shows that the importance of this instrument is broadly recognized by the international community. We call upon all States to become parties to the Joint Convention as soon as possible, thereby allowing for its early entry into force in order to achieve and maintain a high level of safety worldwide.

One more topic which requires action on an international level is the threat represented by illicit trafficking of nuclear material. We support the Agency's preventative activities in this field and also welcome other relevant initiatives, such as the one by the G-8.

Regarding the safety of transport of nuclear material, such transport is subject to an extensive system of rules in the European Union in order to ensure the safety of these activities. Given the global nature of this topic, the Union is grateful to the IAEA for submitting a study on the international regulatory framework in the field of the safety of transport of radioactive materials, in response to the request of last year's General Conference.

There can be no doubt that in the next millennium, too, the international community will be faced with nuclear-related issues that may call for action on an international level. One is that of international nuclear law, where attention will have to be given not only to its

further development but also to the implementation or strengthening of existing instruments, particularly in the fields of safety and liability.

Furthermore, we have to be aware that an increasing number of nuclear power stations worldwide are approaching the end of their life cycle. Consequently, questions concerning the decommissioning of such plants or the extension of their life cycle will have to be given adequate attention.

Looking at the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation sectors, another likely future task of the international community has already been referred to in this statement. If, as we sincerely hope, the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty are brought to a successful conclusion soon, the parties to such an agreement will be faced with the major challenge of implementing the verification provisions of that instrument in a way that makes maximum use of existing verification know-how and is as cost-efficient as possible. In all of the areas just mentioned, the outstanding expertise of the Agency could contribute to finding efficient and reliable solutions.

The European Union is aware of the fact that establishing long wish lists of activities the Agency might engage in is significantly easier than identifying where the means for all these undertakings are to come from. We are confident, however, that ways to finance cost-intensive additional activities of the Agency will be found when this question arises.

The willingness of member States will be all the greater in the light of the Agency's long tradition of providing value for money to its members and its continuing efforts, which we support, to achieve further economies of operation, especially in the support areas.

Mr. McQueen (South Africa): The year 1997 has been one of consolidation and review for the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, has been very thorough in examining every aspect of the Agency's activities. The close scrutiny of all activities undertaken by the Agency and the Director General's ideas for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and value for money, in this regard, are welcomed. My delegation looks forward to the report of the panel of experts that is evaluating the activities of the Agency, and on which the Director General will base his medium-term plan.

Turning now to the specific activities of the Agency, South Africa will continue to support the Agency fully in all its activities, be they in the areas of promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, of promoting nuclear safety or of non-proliferation. For African members of the Agency, in fact, the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is particularly important. It is well known that Africa risks continued marginalization in an era of globalization. All African countries face great challenges in economic and social development. The Agency is able to contribute in a real and tangible way to sustainable development and it should be urged to examine closely how this impact can be maximized and, indeed, increased, recognizing the special needs of developing countries for technical assistance. The Agency's emphasis on the promotion of transfer of technology through technical cooperation between developing countries is clearly the way forward and the Agency can be justifiably proud of its achievements so far.

There is, however, always room for improvement, especially in the area of resources. The resources of the Agency for technical cooperation activities need to be assured, predictable and sufficient to meet the objectives of the Agency. The Technical Cooperation Fund, however, levelled off in 1997 and in a time of growing demand, especially in Africa, we run the risk of undermining the Agency's crucial work in this area. All member States should be urged to contribute to the Fund and to meet their respective targets. These contributions should be seen not as voluntary, but rather as morally obligatory.

Turning now to nuclear safeguards, my delegation welcomes the fact that a number of additional protocols, some with countries having substantial nuclear industries, have already been approved. South Africa has expressed its strong support for the strengthening of safeguards, including the Additional Protocol, and will, on completion of the wide ranging reviews of programmes and legislation which are currently taking place, also sign and ratify the Protocol. Just as the Agency is undergoing a thorough review of all its activities, so in South Africa a thorough review of our energy-related legislation and activities is taking place.

In the broader context of non-proliferation and disarmament, my delegation welcomes the establishment of the trilateral initiative between the Russian Federation, the United States of America and the Agency. Verifying that the fissile materials removed from nuclear weapons

programmes are not returned to military use will be an activity of great significance to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and my delegation is heartened at the prospect of quantifiable progress in international nuclear disarmament arising from the activities of this initiative. Crucial questions do, however, arise over and above the technical and legal challenges posed by this initiative. One challenge is the institutional implications for the IAEA of involvement in the process.

With regard to nuclear safety, South Africa is a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety and looks forward to the first international peer review meeting on country reports. My delegation believes this will be a major contribution to ensuring that adequate and harmonized standards of nuclear safety are maintained throughout the world. South Africa is, furthermore, committed to the international Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. Efforts are also continuing on the development of a national policy on radioactive waste management and South Africa will take the necessary steps towards signature and ratification of the Joint Convention.

Regarding the transportation of radioactive materials, South Africa endorses the safety standards of the IAEA. Consignors of spent fuel, plutonium and high-level waste by sea are encouraged to maintain contact with coastal States and to provide timely information on the passage of shipment within the proximity of their coasts.

With regard to the amendment of article VI of the Statute, my delegation would like to express its regret that it was not possible to agree on an expansion of the Board of Governors and is looking forward to ongoing discussions within the IAEA to find a solution to this problem. Africa's continued under-representation on the Board of Governors remains an issue of great concern.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the IAEA is in good shape and is doing commendable work in all areas in which it is involved. My delegation will continue to give the Agency our full support and we recommend that the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution before us.

Mr. Sharma (India): The Indian delegation has taken note of the contents of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), introduced by Director General Mohammed ElBaradei.

Over the last five decades, India has worked for a nuclear-weapon-free world because nuclear weapons for none means security for all. The recalcitrant approach of the nuclear-weapon States, as defined by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), to work towards nuclear disarmament and our own compelling national security concerns led us this year to redefine the parameters of our security requirements. As a developing country, India hopes that the developing world notices that the countries which have chosen to vehemently criticize the recent tests are either the established nuclear-weapon States, which like to preserve their exclusive status, or are those which have already addressed their nuclear-related national security concerns of the kind India has through agreements or understandings with the nuclear-weapon States.

At the recent summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban, the Prime Minister of India said:

> "We do not believe now, any more than we ever did before, that nuclear weapons are here to stay. On the contrary, if the established nuclear-weapon States agree to negotiations to abolish nuclear weapons, we will be the first to join."

In this context, we welcome the call by the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement for an international conference, preferably before 1999, with the objective of arriving at an agreement before the end of this millennium, on a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time.

From the point of view of developing countries, the focus of the IAEA should be on the statutory technical issues, like nuclear power, and not on extraneous political issues related to nuclear disarmament, a subject better dealt with by the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Nuclear power development takes place when there is an energy need, backed by an adequate level of industrial infrastructure. So it is not surprising that nuclear power development in the early decades was in the United States, Europe and the former Soviet Union. It is now advancing rapidly in parts of Asia, and we are sure it will soon grow in some other parts of the world.

With a view to improving the technical capabilities of developing countries in nuclear power, the IAEA, along with our Department of Atomic Energy, held an international seminar entitled Nuclear Power in Developing Countries: Its Potential Role and Strategies

for its Deployment, in India in October 1998. The seminar, which saw significant participation by experts from the IAEA and a large number of developing countries, was a success. We feel such seminars are appropriate, since developing countries have the greatest need for energy growth. They are also not allergic to nuclear power, as some developed countries tend to be, often because these developed countries have a surfeit of other forms of energy.

The Agency needs to find methodologies so that scientific cooperation in this field is not inhibited by the commercial interests of the vendors. The Agency must also be a prime mover in ensuring that safety related equipment and information on research and development in safety related issues are readily disseminated without being hindered by arbitrary and politically motivated export control regimes. Safeguards, while necessary, must obviously be confined to the respective State's obligations. The hesitation in developing countries to initiate nuclear power programmes is often due to unfamiliarity with the steps needed. A situation must not be created in which the leadership and the public in developing countries, planning to introduce nuclear power for the first time, feel intimidated by safety and threatened by safeguards. The Agency must play a key role in removing such inhibitions while, of course, ensuring perfect safety of nuclear power and implementing its safeguards responsibilities effectively and economically.

Through detailed internal reviews and consultations between professionals, technically achievable targets have been set for our nuclear programme. These reviews have recommended an installed capacity of 20,000 megawatts for nuclear power by the year 2020. India has opened options for reaching the target through accelerating the indigenous construction of pressurized heavy-water reactors and fast breeder reactors with procurement of light-water reactors from friendly countries, followed by development of light-water reactor technology. Since India has limited uranium resources and a very large thorium reserve, it is important for us to utilize the plutonium generated in the first-generation pressurized heavy-water reactors to fuel fast breeder reactors. This would lead to fuller utilization of our thorium reserves. In support of the power programme and the fuel cycle activities, a broad base for basic, applied and engineering research has been established in India. The development of mixed oxide fuel is progressing well, and both the boiling water reactors at Tarapur have been loaded with some mixed oxide assemblies.

No large nuclear programme can be launched and sustained without a strong, independent regulatory body with the authority to set internationally acceptable standards of safety. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India determines the safety standards to be followed and has the authority to inspect and approve the operations of all nuclear installations. It interacts with international bodies and prescribes the dose limits in accordance with the recommendations of the International Commission on Radioactive Protection and ensures compliance. The Board is currently paying special attention to enlarging its involvement in safety research projects of relevance to regulatory decision making. It is also establishing a safety research institute. Our commitment to all aspects of safety — design and engineering safety, operational safety and regulatory safety — is total. Considerable research and development work is devoted to health, safety and environmental problems. A large number of training and retraining programmes are organized, both in cooperation with the IAEA and otherwise. It is hoped that such courses will become an annual feature and will help countries in the region in developing qualified radiation protection personnel.

India has paid considerable attention to non-power applications, including those in nuclear medicine, agriculture and industry as well as in isotope hydrology, pest control and potable water through desalination. We produce over a hundred varieties of radioisotopes. We are very glad that the IAEA is also helping in the introduction of these applications in developing countries. While these uses are important, they should not overshadow the importance of nuclear power.

Human resource development is an important component of technical cooperation activities, and the IAEA should identify centres of excellence for this purpose in the developing countries under the Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (TCDC) programme. It has been our experience that in high technology areas developing countries find it easier to learn from one another because of comparable situations. India has always placed great emphasis on human resource development in nuclear science and engineering. We shall be happy to accept scientists and engineers from developing countries in these fields, either through bilateral arrangements or through the IAEA.

In conclusion, I would like to say that there is a strong need for restoring the original scientific-technical character of the IAEA. The IAEA used to be such an

organization. We must not allow it to degenerate into a shadow political forum trying to replay debates appropriate for the United Nations General Assembly. Unbiased dissemination and deployment of the vast scientific and technical knowledge that has been accumulated in the Agency through thousands of meetings and conferences should be used to meet the objectives laid out in the Statute, namely, to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): Australia is pleased to have the opportunity to commend Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his report on the work of the Agency.

Australia attaches great importance to the central role played by the IAEA in enlarging the contribution of nuclear technology to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, as well as its important role in helping to verify the non-proliferation commitments of the international community. The IAEA is one of the central pillars of the nuclear non-proliferation regime — of which the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is the cornerstone. The Agency is therefore among the international institutions which play a key role in maintaining peace and security.

Nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan have brought new and complex challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. The intensity of the global reaction to those tests has highlighted the determination of the overwhelming majority of States not to allow global security to be threatened by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The tests amply demonstrate that there is no room for complacency in combating that proliferation.

Far from undermining or weakening it, these challenges have served to emphasize the strong political will to maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The international community's resolve to advance the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime in the face of these challenges was demonstrated graphically by the decision of the Conference on Disarmament on 11 August this year to commence negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The IAEA will of course play a very important role in the development of the verification machinery for this treaty, and we strongly support the IAEA in this regard. The commencement and conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty will provide the international community with additional reassurance against the expansion of nuclear arsenals, and will further strengthen the international non-proliferation norm, which has already been reinforced significantly by the permanent extension of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1995; the conclusion and adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996; and agreement on strengthened IAEA safeguards in 1997.

Australia welcomed very warmly the announcement in May this year by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso that Brazil had acceded to the NPT and ratified the CTBT. This is a landmark achievement which highlights the seriousness of Brazil's commitment to make every effort to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Brazil's accession to the NPT brings the number of States parties to the Treaty to 187, making it the most widely adhered to arms control treaty.

Brazil's accession brings us one step closer to universal membership of the NPT and the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Australia calls upon the remaining few States not party to the NPT to follow Brazil's exemplary action by acceding to the Treaty. The sooner the NPT achieves universal adherence and full implementation, the safer the world will be.

Australia remains concerned about Iraq's suspension of cooperation with the IAEA, and obviously deeply concerned by the most recent developments relating to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). We are also concerned by the continuing non-compliance of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Iraq's action is unacceptable, and in contravention of Security Council resolutions. Australia urges Iraq to resume full cooperation with the Agency, and with UNSCOM, so that the international community can be confident that its action is not designed to conceal weapons of mass destruction.

With respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the lack of progress on the issue of preservation of information which must remain available to enable the Agency to verify in the future the correctness and completeness of that country's initial declaration under its safeguards agreement is a matter of deep concern. It is imperative that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea comply fully with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA.

The Agency's safeguards system provides an essential framework for managing proliferation pressures, as well as providing for a high level of cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Australia is committed to preserving and indeed strengthening the effectiveness and the efficiency of safeguards. We commend and strongly support the work of the IAEA in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime through the conclusion of additional safeguards protocols, and the development of new safeguards measures pursuant to the protocols. Strengthened safeguards are critical to international security, as has been demonstrated by the need to be able to detect undeclared activities in countries such as Iraq and to have unambiguous assurances about the status of the nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The IAEA's programme to strengthen safeguards, following on from Programme 93 + 2, allows the Agency to provide more reliable assurances that States are complying with their non-proliferation obligations. This forms a crucial part of a dynamic and continuing process of strengthening the safeguards system, for which there is near universal support.

Parties to the NPT have a duty to ensure that their obligations under the Treaty are given effect internationally and domestically. Our respective national security interests also dictate that we do everything in our power to limit to the greatest extent possible the potential for further proliferation in all regions of concern. Australia recognizes that ultimately the efficacy of the strengthened safeguards system will depend on how soon States sign on to the Model Additional Protocol. It is essential for the protocol measures to be brought into widespread operation as quickly as possible. Australia signed its additional protocol agreement with the IAEA on 23 September 1997. We were the first country to do so. That agreement entered into force on 12 December 1997.

Fourteen protocols have now been approved by the IAEA Board of Governors. Major protocols approved at the June Board meeting included three with nuclear-weapon States — the United States, the United Kingdom and France — as well as the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and Canada. Australia encourages all countries which have not yet done so to sign and ratify model protocols with the Agency as soon as possible to ensure that this really powerful international instrument against nuclear proliferation is made as strong as possible. We believe that achievement of that goal will return practical dividends in terms of enhanced global and regional security.

Australia also places a high priority on the IAEA's technical cooperation programme. We support the measures taken by the agency to strengthen the effectiveness of its activities in this area. We note that the technical cooperation projects proposed to the Board for 1999-2000 will meet specific design standards that include specified objectives, detailed work plans, measurable outputs and performance indicators. Those changes are expected to strengthen the Agency's ability to maximize the economic and social benefits of nuclear technology to the most needy countries. Meanwhile, Australia will contribute approximately $A 1.3 million to the Technical Cooperation Fund for the coming year.

In our view, since it was introduced in 1972 the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology (RCA) has proved to be an important and effective means of promoting cooperation in the region in a wide range of nuclear science and technology areas. In June this year we paid approximately half a million dollars to the RCA as the first of what are expected to be three payments totalling about $A 1.6 million. That was to fund our next RCA project, the application of radioisotope technology to sustainable infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific. That project, which is very interesting, covers infrastructure support in the areas of public sector engineering, strengthening radiation protection and regional education of nuclear medicine technologists.

The Agency's continuing emphasis on the development and monitoring of nuclear safety standards is widely and strongly supported. In this area, we welcome the Director General's decision to review the Agency's overall nuclear safety strategy as a separate exercise. We also very much welcome the decision to re-examine the Nuclear Safety Review in order to give it a sharper focus in identifying and assessing specific measures which need to be taken to improve nuclear safety.

Another essential component of the non-proliferation regime is the system of nuclear export controls, such as those applied by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Those controls facilitate transfers consistent with the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They do not have a hidden agenda. Indeed, in the interests of transparency, the Nuclear Suppliers Group has launched a series of

seminars on the role of export controls in nuclear non-proliferation. A first seminar was held in Vienna in October 1997; a second seminar will be held just before the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in New York in April next year. Those seminars go some way to meeting the expectation at the NPT Review and Extension Conference that efforts shall be made to explain better to the international community the operation of nuclear export controls and their contribution to nuclear non-proliferation.

Australia notes that earlier this year the Director General initiated a review of the programme of activities of the Agency. We recognize the budgetary pressures under which the Agency has been operating since the imposition of zero real growth limits 14 years ago. Regrettably, this situation is compounded not only by escalating demands on the Agency's resources but also by significant levels of non-payment of contributions by a small number of Member States. It would be alleviated if Member States met their financial obligations to the Agency in full and on time. We hope the Director General's review of the Agency will produce new and innovative ideas which will assist him to map out a new vision for the future management of the Agency's programme and activities.

Finally, Australia wants to compliment the Director General for introducing changes to the Agency's policy and coordination, programme and budget formulation and evaluation, and to its procedures and personnel systems. We hope that those reforms will make a valuable contribution to strengthening the foundations of the Agency. The Director General can continue to count on my Government's constructive support for his efforts to strengthen the contribution that the Agency makes to the promotion of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and overall to the cause of international peace and security.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his comprehensive introduction of the report of the IAEA contained in document GC(42)/5 and for his overview of the Agency's activities in the last year. We would also like to thank the Permanent Representative of Slovenia, Ambassador Danilo Türk, for introducing the draft resolution on the report, contained in document A/53/L.18, of which Kazakhstan is a sponsor.

The international community pays, and will continue to pay, the closest attention to the objectives and tasks of the IAEA in ensuring global security under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The effective mechanisms developed by the IAEA for monitoring trafficking in nuclear materials, the strengthening of the international safeguards system and the conduct of effective cooperation on issues of nuclear power, radiation safety and handling of waste have made an important contribution to the practical solution of the problems facing the international community in this area.

The IAEA's annual report, which is before us for consideration, gives a clear demonstration of the vitally important role of the Agency in solving these complex problems in accordance with its Statute and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

Kazakhstan scrupulously fulfils the international obligations it has assumed in relation to the strengthening of the existing safeguards system. The safeguards agreement between Kazakhstan and the IAEA, signed in August 1995, has entered into force and is being successfully implemented. All of the Republic's peaceful nuclear activity has been placed under IAEA safeguards. The possibility is currently under consideration of signing an additional protocol to the comprehensive safeguards agreement which will make it possible to increase the effectiveness of measures to maintain and strengthen the non-proliferation regime in the country and the transparency of our nuclear activity, and to strengthen the international community's confidence in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan welcomes the steps taken by the IAEA to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. While acknowledging the Agency's important role in supporting the efforts of Governments and in coordinating measures in this field, we nevertheless believe that the main responsibility for solving this serious problem continues to rest with member States themselves. In Kazakhstan, a State nuclear materials accountancy and control system has been established and is in operation. The activity of the Republic's enterprises in the nuclear sphere is controlled by the relevant national legislation, which defines the basic principles for regulating the activity of these enterprises and lays down the nuclear and radiation safety rules and regulations. In February 1998 a resolution of the Government of Kazakhstan approved regulations for the licensing of activity relating to the use of atomic energy which have become the main mechanism for performance of the functions of our national Atomic Energy Agency. We are compiling

databases on nuclear materials stocks, and conducting organizational measures to improve the qualifications of specialists employed in the nuclear materials accountancy and control system.

In its export policy, Kazakhstan complies with all the Agency's requirements relating to the import and export of nuclear materials. The relevant principles are reflected in the Export Control Act and the Utilization of Atomic Energy Act. We are ready to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group. In this connection, Kazakhstan has since 1997 been complying in its activity in the field of export of nuclear materials and technology with the Governing Principles of that Group.

Kazakhstan strongly supports the IAEA's efforts aimed at strengthening nuclear safety, and, as a country which possesses nuclear reactors, has since 1997 been among the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety. The reinforcement of that Convention by other international legal instruments will, in our view, facilitate the shaping of a global nuclear safety culture.

The problem of handling radioactive wastes formed as a result of economic activity associated with the exploitation of uranium and other deposits, and of the processing of wastes from the coal industry, the use of nuclear facilities and the development of nuclear power, occupies an important place in Kazakhstan's nuclear activity. In this connection, we greatly appreciate the efforts of the IAEA and its member States to draw up the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, which Kazakhstan signed last year. As a result of the adoption of that instrument, safety standards have been introduced in that sensitive sphere of activity.

The development of nuclear power plays an important role in the implementation of a set of programmes aimed at ensuring Kazakhstan's energy self-sufficiency. As far back as October 1995, the Government took a decision on the need to complete the drafting of a concept for the development of energy, including atomic energy, for the period up to 2030, and of draft legislation on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In March 1996, a Government working group on the construction of a nuclear power station in Kazakhstan's territory was established. A prominent place in the concept is assigned to the assessment of different types of nuclear power stations and their cost effectiveness, and to issues relating to the burial of radioactive wastes.

For the forthcoming biennium, 1999-2000, a number of projects have been included in Kazakhstan's programme of technical cooperation with the IAEA. In particular, it is proposed to conduct an analysis of the safety of the project for a new nuclear power station and the economic feasibility of constructing it in southern Kazakhstan, and to set up a low background radiological laboratory to study the situation in west Kazakhstan and to conduct a number of other projects of importance to the Republic.

Active cooperation between the Government of Kazakhstan and the Agency is continuing on a study of the radiological situation in the territory of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, where, over a period of more than 40 years, 470 nuclear explosions were conducted, 113 of them in the atmosphere. This accounts for about 70 per cent of all the nuclear-weapons tests conducted by the former Soviet Union. The results of these joint studies are helping to determine possible ways of eliminating the consequences of the many years of nuclear weapons tests.

In implementation of General Assembly resolution 52/169 M, on international cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region in Kazakhstan, in the spring of this year United Nations Headquarters organized an inter-agency mission, with the participation of representatives of specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations, including the IAEA. This summer the mission visited the Semipalatinsk region, where it conducted a comprehensive study of the consequences of the many years of nuclear tests. I should like to express our sincere gratitude to the IAEA experts and those from the other specialized agencies involved for their support and for their efforts to draw up a comprehensive and objective report on the true extent of the consequences of the nuclear tests in the Semipalatinsk region. We express the hope that in the future technical assistance from the Agency will grow commensurately with Kazakhstan's urgent problems in this respect.

In September this year, for the second time, an international conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was held in Kurchatov, Kazakhstan. It is symbolic that an international conference on this important topic was held in a town that for many years was the centre of a nuclear testing ground. The conference, timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the first joint experiment in the monitoring of nuclear tests, was attended by leading specialists and experts

from Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the United States, and also by representatives of the United Nations, the IAEA, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the Conference on Disarmament. More than 70 statements were presented covering various aspects of the maintenance and strengthening of the non-proliferation regime, the conversion of former testing grounds, the elimination of the consequences of the tests and ensuring the radiation safety of the population and protection of the environment.

During the work of the conference, on 17 September, a demonstration calibration explosion was conducted, in the course of which, using chemical explosives, the last strategic missile launch silo was destroyed.

Today's world is unimaginable without the widespread use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. These include not only nuclear energy supply, but also many nuclear physics isotope technologies and procedures which have found their way into almost all areas of our lives. The progressive development of peaceful nuclear technologies is under way, and under these circumstances the task of maintaining and strengthening the non-proliferation regime remains, and will continue to be a topical issue.

Kazakhstan holds in high esteem the contribution of the IAEA to the strengthening of peace and security, and will always support the work of this authoritative international agency.

Mr. Galuška (Czech Republic): At the outset I wish to voice my country's support for the statement delivered by the representative of Austria on behalf of the European Union and associated countries. I shall limit my intervention to those issues which the Czech Republic considers to be of particular importance.

In September we met at the forty-second session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to assess not only what we had accomplished but also what was still left to be done. The principal mission of the IAEA remains unchanged: to promote the use of nuclear energy for the benefit of the peace, health and prosperity of mankind and to prevent its misuse for military purposes. To entirely fulfil its mandate the Agency needs to have a capable head, good management and an effective and efficient steering organ: the Board of Governors.

I am glad to say that the Director General, Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, in the course of his first year in office, has proved to be both a patient diplomatic negotiator and a skilled chief manager of the Agency. I would like to congratulate him on all his achievements and wish him full success in his future work.

As for the Board, we have had intensive and lengthy discussions on a package of closely connected issues, such as the possible size and composition of the Board, the right of member States to belong to a particular geographical group, and criteria for designating members of the Board. The Czech Republic has articulated its support for the status quo on numerous occasions. It is our opinion that the Board in its present size and composition represents one of the most effective and efficient bodies of the United Nations system. On the other hand, we understand that some member States do not share our view. In this respect, we believe that a package proposal by the Chairman of the Board comprising all aspects of the problem represents a good compromise. We welcomed the statement by the President of the forty-second IAEA General Conference urging the Board to redouble its efforts to achieve a solution to this long-standing issue pursuant to the mandate previously conferred on it by the Conference. The Czech Republic is prepared to take part in seeking a final solution.

The mandate given to the Agency by its statute becomes even more relevant in the light of the nuclear tests carried out in the South Asian region. The international community must not slacken its efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Czech Republic appeals to States which have not yet done so, particularly those with nuclear capabilities, to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, unconditionally and without delay. We also call upon the States concerned to stop their military nuclear programmes and place all their nuclear facilities under the Agency's safeguards.

There is no need to emphasize the role the IAEA plays under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the significance of that Treaty. We took active part in the work of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in the year 2000, where, as we have in other forums, we advocated the principle of the universality of the Treaty. The Czech Republic remains committed to the principles of the NPT and makes every effort to comply with its obligations under the Treaty.

The Czech Republic highly appreciates the finalization of the Model Additional Protocol to safeguards agreements. We believe its implementation will significantly contribute to greater transparency in the nuclear programmes of the countries concerned, and will at the same time strengthen the capability of the IAEA to detect in time all undeclared use of nuclear materials and energy for other than peaceful applications. We welcome the fact that 29 countries, including three nuclear-weapon States, have signed the Model Protocol and that one of them has already started its implementation. We share the view that the Model Protocol can become fully effective only if implemented by all States parties to IAEA safeguards agreements. It should be in the interest of member States to provide clear evidence that their nuclear programmes are of a peaceful nature.

I regret to say that the Czech Republic is among the countries whose territories are used for illicit traffic in nuclear materials. We take this problem as a growing threat — and as a challenge to seek ways and means to combat organized gangs of traffickers. We are of the view that the most effective protection against illicit trafficking in nuclear materials is the strict application of the measures of the State System of Accounting for and Control of Nuclear Material in the countries of their origin — that is, in the countries where the nuclear materials get into the hands of unauthorized persons. Mutual cooperation between the IAEA and member States should also play an important role in this field. We welcome the Agency's Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Nuclear Material, particularly the setting up of a database of cases of seizure of smuggled material by local authorities, which we see as a cornerstone of communication and early information.

As a State party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Czech Republic has submitted its national report under the Convention in conformity with its articles 5 and 20 to be reviewed by the Convention's review meeting in April 1999. Our report provides comprehensive information on the existing legal framework, comprising the Atomic Act and related implementation regulations, as well as a case study on nuclear power plants, carried out under the Convention.

In line with its long-term policy in the field of the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, the Czech Republic has signed the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We attach great importance to that Convention and consider it to be a fundamental, legally binding instrument introducing the highest safety standards also to this very sensitive area. I would like to call upon the States which have not yet become party to the Joint Convention to sign and ratify it, thus enabling its early entry into force.

Let me now touch upon the issue of IAEA technical assistance and cooperation. As I have already mentioned here, the mandate of the Agency, anchored in its statute, is to promote worldwide peaceful uses of nuclear energy in all spheres of human activity. This mandate can be discharged only by means of effective, result-oriented, cost-efficient programmes of technical cooperation and assistance on the one hand and of predictable financial resources on the other. It is in the hands of member States how the target figures proposed for the Technical Cooperation Fund will be met. States should shoulder their responsibility and pay their Fund pledges in full and on time.

In conclusion, allow me to express once again our high esteem for the work of the Agency and our wishes for much success in the future.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): My delegation is grateful to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the annual report of the Agency, which provides a very detailed description of IAEA activities.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the effective activities of the IAEA. We want the Agency to remain an international organization with a strong reputation in the sphere of nuclear affairs, one that actively promotes the development of the peaceful uses of atomic energy to serve the urgent needs of the international community and that carries out verification activities which in turn are the key element of the regime for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The international community has recently made substantial progress in resolving the main tasks of maintaining global and regional security. At the same time, we consider that the current necessity for a comprehensive strengthening of the nuclear weapons non-proliferation regime is the key aspect for ensuring nuclear safety and security.

Given the current difficult situation at a time when the existing regime has been seriously tested, Russia — as one of the depositaries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) —

unequivocally confirms the constancy of its position in respect of the basic principles of the Treaty. In this context, we consider it of great importance that the Conference on Disarmament has decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee which shall, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate contained therein, negotiate a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

One serious problem concerns the use of fissile materials that have been declared as no longer being needed for defence purposes. Russia proceeds on the basis that disengaged nuclear materials should be used first of all in nuclear power production. We have therefore initiated and are successfully carrying out a number of international projects aimed at producing a detailed technical and economic analysis of the problems in this area. The intergovernmental agreement between Russia and the United States on science and technology cooperation in the field of the treatment of plutonium removed from nuclear military programmes plays a significant role in those efforts.

Transparency in the sphere of the use of materials removed from weapon programmes is a new type of work for the Agency. In this regard, the joint work of Russian, American and IAEA experts within the framework of the 1996 trilateral initiative concerning the application of the Agency's verification procedures to weapon-grade fissile materials claimed as redundant for defence purposes is of great importance.

We are glad to note that since the beginning of its activities the Agency has deservedly enjoyed the high reputation of a competent international organization in the nuclear field and has been making all necessary efforts to assist Member States in developing their nuclear power production capacities. We find the Agency's activities in rendering technical assistance to developing countries to implement priority programmes in the sphere of the peaceful use of atomic energy to be of the greatest importance. Despite the economic difficulties facing Russia, we are now participating in the IAEA's technical cooperation programme by supplying equipment and organizing and conducting training courses and field work for experts from developing countries.

Russia regards the use of an enormous research potential, formerly the exclusive prerogative of military programmes, as one of the areas of nuclear power development related to the reduction in and utilization of nuclear weapons. We view the Agency's role in this regard as coordinating international cooperation with a view to choosing an economically sound and environmentally safe use of weapon-grade materials in civilian nuclear-fuel cycle.

The future of nuclear power is inextricably linked with the need to meet ever-growing safety requirements. We believe it is important to further develop the positive initiatives agreed upon at the Moscow Nuclear Safety and Security Summit. We also note with satisfaction that the IAEA has begun to play a more active role in this field.

The creation of international legal mechanisms to regulate nuclear activities has continued, with the active involvement of the Agency. One of the obvious achievements in this field was the drafting and adoption of the international Convention on Nuclear Safety. The Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management has been developed under the auspices of the IAEA.

We would like to note the Agency's work in elaborating standards and norms which reflect the latest achievements of countries in ensuring nuclear and radiation safety and security. We also support IAEA activities to put a halt to illegal trafficking in nuclear materials and activities aimed at increasing the level of physical protection and developing national systems for the inventory and verification of nuclear materials. We support enhanced interaction between States to end nuclear smuggling.

Russia has consistently supported IAEA activities aimed at improving the safeguards system. The verification activities of the Agency should continue to be a priority that allows for a technically precise, politically impartial and legally indisputable analysis of the nature of nuclear activities carried out by non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

In conclusion, the delegation of the Russian Federation would like to join other delegations that have expressed their approval of the Agency's 1997 annual report.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation to the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, for his leadership of the

Agency during the past year and for his very helpful introduction of the Agency's report. The Government of Japan fully supports his efforts to strengthen the Agency's technical cooperation activities through the development of effective programmes aimed at improving the scientific, technological and regulatory capabilities of developing countries, in line with the resolutions adopted at the last session of the IAEA General Conference.

The nuclear tests conducted in South-West Asia earlier this year underscored the importance of maintaining and strengthening the safeguards system of the IAEA. The people of Japan were particularly shocked, as we know at first hand the unspeakable horrors of nuclear weapons and are determined not to allow nuclear tragedies such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki ever again to visit the globe. We therefore renew our hope that the additional protocol will be concluded by a broad range of countries and that it will become the norm at the earliest possible time.

It is also clear that the IAEA must continue to play a key role in ensuring Iraqi compliance with its obligations under the resolutions of the Security Council relating to the abolition of various types of weapons of mass destruction. We continue to support the activities of the IAEA Action Team in this regard. Japan calls upon Iraq to rescind its decision of 5 August, as demanded in Security Council resolution 1194 (1998) of 9 September, and its decision of 31 October, and to resume immediate, complete and unconditional cooperation with the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) and the IAEA. Without the rescission of these decisions, we are prevented from seeing any developments towards the lifting of the sanctions imposed under the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Turning now to the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), Japan reaffirms that the safeguards agreement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the IAEA remains binding and in force. We are deeply concerned that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not cooperated with the IAEA with respect to the monitoring of the freezing of its facilities, and that it has not taken clear measures to preserve information concerning its past nuclear activities. It is also regrettable that no progress has been made in the technical discussions between the IAEA and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Recalling Security Council resolution 825 (1993) and the series of presidential statements of 31 March, 8 April, 30 May and 4 November of 1993, as well as the resolution adopted by the General Conference of the IAEA on 25 September, Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to cooperate fully with the IAEA for the full implementation of the safeguards agreement.

Finally, I should like to underscore Japan's position that technical cooperation — which, aside from the maintenance of the safeguards system, is the major area of IAEA endeavour — must be strictly limited to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Such cooperation has an important role to play in promoting development in developing countries, and Japan pays high tribute to the activities of the IAEA in this area.

I should like to end my remarks by reiterating Japan's commitment to the work of the Agency.

Agenda item 20 *(continued)*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

The Acting President: I have received a request from the delegation of Honduras to reconsider, under rule 81, the resolution adopted this morning on this sub-item, now resolution 53/1 C, the text of which was contained in document A/53/L.17.

Since I hear no objection, we shall proceed to reconsider the resolution.

It was so decided.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

Mr. Noé-Pino (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express my gratitude for the opportunity to speak on the resolution on emergency assistance to Belize, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, which was adopted this morning by the General Assembly. The resolution was initially co-sponsored by Belize, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel and Nicaragua, which were joined by Canada, China, Colombia, Cyprus, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, India, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Senegal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

The emergency situation in Central America as a result of Hurricane Mitch is indescribable, with considerable human losses and property damage. At this time of death, anguish and sadness, our societies are mobilizing to help thousands of our compatriots in their rescue and assistance efforts. That spirit of solidarity is further strengthened and heightened by the relief and support provided us by the international community. We appeal for solidarity on the part of the Members of the United Nations themselves so that the United Nations organs and agencies as well as the States bilaterally may give us the necessary support to overcome this tragedy.

The figure of speech "to be in the eye of the hurricane" became a painful reality for Honduras. Despite our limited ability thoroughly to evaluate the situation in Honduras and in the other Central American countries, we have determined that to date no less than 300 people have died, an undetermined number of persons are missing, and some 250,000 have left their homes. More than 1 million persons have been affected. Entire communities are cut off from communication due to flooding as 50 rivers have overflowed, causing the most severe damage in the history of our country. These communities have no food, drinking water or medicine and are facing a tragic situation.

The Atlantic coast — the hub of economic activity, generating more than 60 per cent of the gross national product and 80 per cent of export production — is the area most severely affected. This region is completely paralysed, with enormous human and material losses that will require assistance in the short, medium and long term.

In Nicaragua, preliminary information indicates that at least 1,500 persons have died and thousands are missing. At least 180,000 people are without the basic necessities, 172 communities are cut off, and at least 5,066 homes have been destroyed. In Belize, thousands of people were evacuated owing to an alert issued by the national authorities. In El Salvador, according to the extremely preliminary information available, at least 100 persons have died and 27,000 have been affected. It is reported that in Panama, 8,000 persons have been affected and that one person, in the zone of Darién, has died. In Costa Rica, seven people are reported dead, 3,500 have been affected and 2,064 have had to seek refuge in safe places.

As is understandable, there is extensive damage in the region, and the tasks that lie ahead are immense. Despite our grief, the strength of character and the integrity of our men, women and children will make rehabilitation and reconstruction possible, with the generous cooperation of the international community to complement our efforts. As the President of the Republic of Honduras, Carlos Roberto Flores, said last week — and this applies to all the countries of Central America —

> "Our nations have rallied and are ready to work. May God help us and bless us. May God hear our prayers. We are not alone; we are united in fraternal solidarity. The international community is at our side, with solicitude and friendship, to complement our own efforts and resources."

Therefore, I would like not only to thank all the countries for the support they showed in adopting the resolution this morning, but also to add two more points that I believe are important in view of the most recent events. First, I would like to add the name of the Republic of El Salvador to the relevant parts of the resolution, since in the late hours of Saturday and on Sunday the force of the hurricane struck that fraternal country. Secondly, I would like to amend operative paragraph 6 of the resolution to read as follows:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly, under agenda item 20, through the Economic and Social Council at the next humanitarian questions segment of its substantive session on the collaborative effort referred to in paragraph 4 above and on the progress made with the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts of the affected countries."

For the solidarity and cooperation of the international community, the affected Central America countries mentioned in this resolution are all grateful for the Assembly's support and solidarity.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised?

Resolution 53/1 C, as orally revised, was adopted.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.